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A study to assess the psychological wellbeing among parents of hospitalized children in selected hospitals of Guwahati, Kamrup (M), Assam

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Abstract

Having a child hospitalized is a stressful event for parents who often experience anxiety and depression during the period of hospitalization. The impact of pediatric illnesses and disabilities on family stress has been well documented in the literature.

The objectives of the study were to measure psychological wellbeing among parents of the hospitalized children, and to find the association between psychological wellbeing of parent and selected demographic variables and illness related variables of the child. A cross sectional study was carried out on a sample of 120 parents of hospitalized children in a selected hospital using purposive sampling technique. The data were collected using self report questionnaire –modified Psychological General Wellbeing index- 22 items for measuring the psychological wellbeing level of the parents. Ethical consideration was obtained from IEC, Regional College of Nursing and informed consent was taken from the subjects. The study finding showed that Majority of the subjects, i.e. 62.5% (75) have average psychological wellbeing followed by 22.5% (27) having poor psychological wellbeing and 15.0% (18) have good psychological wellbeing. The chi square test results reveal that psychological wellbeing has a significant association the parent's religion, family income, occupation and duration of hospitalization of the child. Hence, parents psychosocial functioning is important for children's physical and mental health outcomes. On the basis of the present study findings it is concluded that hospitalization of the child greatly influence the parent's psychological wellbeing and their attitudes during a child's illness, especially during hospitalization, may deeply influence the child's adherence to the care and impact of the disease.

Keywords: Psychological wellbeing, children, parents, hospitalization

Introduction

Psychological wellbeing is an important part of every individual's general health. The literature on psychological wellbeing has progressed rapidly since the emergence of field over five decades ago ^[1].

Psychological well-being is the combination of feeling good and functioning effectively. Sustainable well-being does not require individuals to feel good all the time; the experience of painful emotions (e.g. disappointment, failure, grief) is a normal part of life, and being able to manage these negative or painful emotions is essential for long-term well-being. Psychological well-being is, however, compromised when negative emotions are extreme or very long lasting and interfere with a person's ability to function in his or her daily life ^[2].

Parenting is one of the most difficult of all endeavors. Each parent uses an individual style that can have a significant influence on a child's development. Parent whose children have been admitted to the hospital feel not only separation from their children but also that other people are taking care of their children in their place. Anxiety during a child's illness interferes with a parent's ability to provide support. The anxious parent can be recognized by the trembling, hoarse, or wavery voice, restlessness, irritability, withdrawal, angry, hostile and aggressive behavior towards those caring for the child. Causes of parental anxiety due to child's hospitalization include strange environment in the hospital, separation from the child, unknown events and outcome, etc ^[4].

Psychological wellbeing refers to how people see and evaluate their lives. According to Deiner (1997), these evaluations may be in the form of cognitions or in the form of affect. The cognitive part is an information based appraisal of one's life which occurs when a

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person gives conscious evaluative judgments about one's satisfaction with as a whole. The affective part is a hedonic evaluation guided by emotions and feelings such as frequency with which people experience pleasant moods in reaction to the events taking place in their lives [7].

"Psychological wellbeing is a multi-faceted concept encompassing positive relationships with others, personal mastery, autonomy, a feeling of purpose and meaning in life, and personal growth and development. It is a state of balance determined by both challenging and rewarding life events". (Carol Ryff) [8].

Hayman, (1990) defines in general "psychological well being is a mental condition characterized by pleasant feelings of good health, exhilaration, high self-esteem and confidence, and it often associated with regular physical activity [5].

The theory on psychological wellbeing developed by Carol Ryff includes six factors which determine the balance in life events contributing to an individual's psychological well-being, contentment and happiness [8].

Positive contributing factors to psychological wellbeing may emerge from various sources. A happy marriage is contributive, for example, as is a satisfying job or a meaningful relationship with another person. A propensity to unrealistic optimism and over-exaggerated self-evaluations may be useful. These positive illusions are especially important when an individual receives threatening negative feedback, as the illusions allows for adaptation in these circumstances to protect psychological wellbeing and self confidence (Taylor and Brown, 1988).

Optimism also can help an individual cope with stresses to their wellbeing. Psychological wellbeing can also be affected negatively, as is the case with a degrading unrewarding work environment, unfulfilling obligations and unsatisfying relationships. Childhood traumatic experiences diminish psychological wellbeing throughout adult life and can damage psychological resilience in children, adolescents and adults. Perceived stigma also diminished psychological wellbeing, particularly stigma in relation to obesity and other physical ailments or disabilities [9].

The stressors of hospitalization may cause young children to experience short and long-term negatives outcomes. Common responses include regression, separation anxiety apathy, fear, and sleeping disturbances especially for children younger than 7 years of age [11].

Parent feels anxiety, anger, fear, disappointment, self-blame and possible guilt feeling due to lack of confidence and competence for caring the child in illness and wellness [10]. Lee W S, Chai P F, Ismail Z found out that Parents experience being upset, helpless, mentally and physically exhausted, and having experienced loss of sleep and disruption of daily routine during the hospitalization of their child [13].

Statement of the problem

"A Study to Assess the Psychological Wellbeing among Parents of Hospitalized Children in Selected Hospitals of Guwahati, Kamrup (M), Assam".

Objectives of the study

- To assess the psychological wellbeing among parents of hospitalized children in selected hospitals of Guwahati, Kamrup (M), Assam

- To find out the association between the psychological wellbeing among parents of hospitalized children and the selected demographic variables in selected hospitals of Guwahati, Kamrup (M), Assam
- To find out the association between psychological wellbeing among parents of hospitalized children and illness related variables of child in selected hospitals of Guwahati, Kamrup (M), Assam

Research Methodology

Research approach: To fulfill the objectives of the present study, a quantitative research approach is selected.

Research design: To study the nature of phenomenon under the present study, Cross sectional descriptive research design is selected.

Schematic design

The research process of the present study is shown schematically in figure.

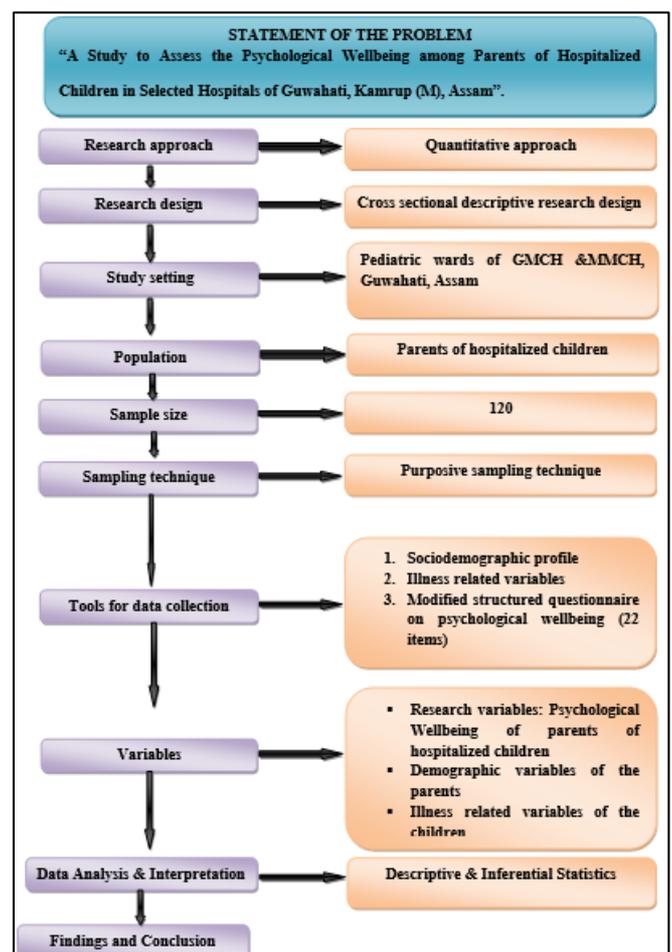


Fig 1: Schematic representation of research study

Result

1. Finding related to demographic characteristics of the subjects

- Majority of the subjects, i.e. 47.5% (57) falls in the age group of 26 to 35 years, majority of the subjects, i.e. 74.2% (89) were female and 25.8% (31) were male. Majority of the subject's i.e., 41.7% (50) were higher secondary pass where as only 1.7% (2) were professionals.
- Majority of the subjects were homemaker i.e., 33.3% (40), and 43.3% (52) have the family income (Rs. 6327-

Rs. 18949). Majority of the subjects i.e., 89.2%(107) are married and have two number of child i.e., 40.8% (49)

- Out of 120 subjects, majority i.e. 52.5% (63) belongs to Hindu religion and 64.2% (77) belongs to nuclear family and 60.8% (73) of the subjects were from rural area

2. Frequency and percentage distribution to describe selected illness related variables

- Majority of the children i.e.33.3% (40) belong to 0-1 yr of age, while 32.5% (39) belongs to the age group of 1-3yrs and 22.5% (27) belongs to 3-6 yrs of age and 8.3% (10) belongs to age group of 6-12 yrs and 3.3% (4) belong to age group >12 yrs.
- Majority of the children i.e. 48.33% (58) were diagnose with Gastro-intestinal tract disorders, followed by respiratory disorders i.e., 25.83% (31). 9.17% of the

children were diagnosed with neurological & neuromuscular disorders and 10% (12) and 6.67% (11) were diagnosed with genitor-urinary and cardiac disorders respectively.

- Majority of the children duration of hospitalization is less than one week i.e, 43.3% (52), followed by 1-2 weeks of hospitalization i.e., 27.5% (33) and 12.5% (15) for 3-4weeks and 10.8% (13) and 5.8% (7) for 2-3 weeks and >1month of hospitalization respectively
- Majority of the children i.e. 27.5% (33) were admitted in Pediatric Medicine, followed by 25% (30) in NICU, and 23.3% (28) and 24.2% (29) were admitted in Pediatric surgery and PICU respectively
- Majority of the children had no history of hospitalization i.e., 70% (84) and 30% (36) does not have any history of hospitalization

3. Psychological wellbeing among the subjects

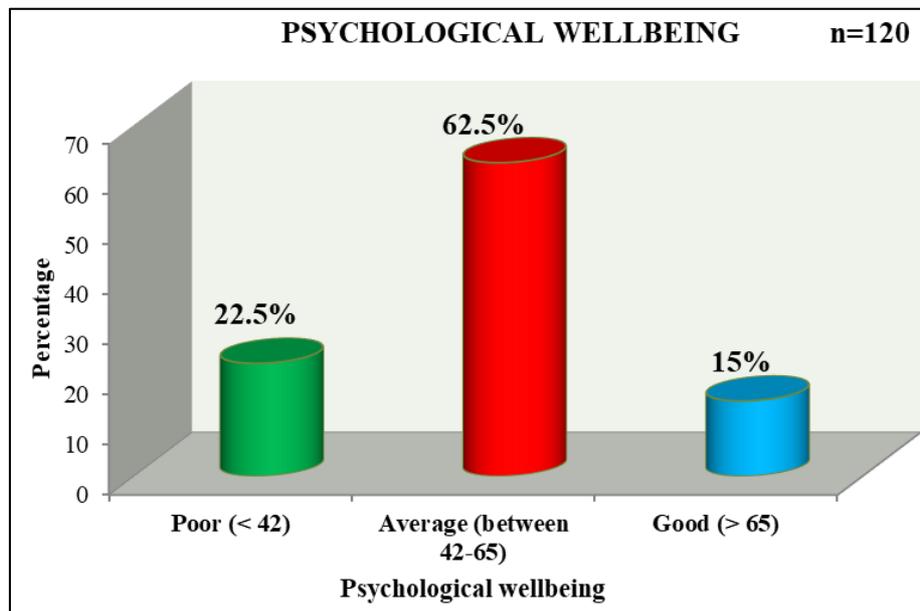


Fig 1: Bar diagram showing percentage distribution of subjects according to level of psychological wellbeing

4. Association between psychological wellbeing and selected demographic variables.

- Association between psychological wellbeing and selected demographic variables shows that, psychological wellbeing is significantly associated with religion, family income, and occupation of the subjects

5. Association between psychological wellbeing and illness related variables of the child

- Association between psychological wellbeing and illness related variables of the child shows that, psychological wellbeing is significantly associated with duration of hospitalization of the child.

Discussion

Objective 1: To assess the psychological wellbeing among parents of hospitalized children in selected hospitals of Guwahati, Kamrup (M), Assam

In the present study, the finding reveals that majority of the subjects, i.e. 62.5% (75) have average psychological wellbeing followed by 22.5% (27) having poor psychological wellbeing and 15.0% (18) of the subjects have good psychological wellbeing.

The finding of the present study is supported by the study conducted by S. Parameswari & Dr. J.O. Jeryda, 2017^[18] to assess the level of psychological well being among the parents of children with intellectual and developmental disabilities where it was found that more than half i.e. 56.8% of the respondents are having low level of psychological wellbeing.

The finding of the present study is supported by another study conducted by Stremmer R, Haddad S, Pullenayegum E, Parshuram C (2017)^[21] to assess the Psychological Outcomes in Parents of Critically ill Hospitalized Children, where the research findings indicated that 24% of parents achieved scores characteristic of severe anxiety. Proportions of parents with symptoms indicative of major depression and significant decisional conflict were 51% and 26% respectively.

Objective 2: To identify the association between the psychological wellbeing among parents of hospitalized children and the selected demographic variables.

The finding related to association between psychological wellbeing and selected demographic variables shows that, psychological wellbeing is significantly associated with

religion, family income, and occupation of the subjects. Whereas, it is found that psychological wellbeing is not associated with age, gender, educational qualification, marital status, number of children, and type of family and place of residence.

The finding of the present study is supported by study conducted by Tsironi S, Koulierakis G(2018) ^[29] to assess the factors associated with parents' levels of stress in pediatric wards found that Being single ($p < .001$), having lower educational level ($p = .005$), hospitalization of the child for more than 14 days ($p = .001$), and numerous previous visits by the parents in the past ($p = .014$) were the predictors of experiencing high levels of stress.

In addition, the finding of the present study is also supported by the finding of the study conducted by Vernon L, Eyles D, Hulbert C, Bretherton L, McCarthy MC (2017) ^[33] to assess the psychological distress among parent of infant with cancer. The findings related to the association between psychological wellbeing and demographic variables reveal that no significant association between psychological wellbeing and age and gender, with the exception of the number of children in the family.

The findings are contradictory to the study conducted by Nizam M, Norzila MZ (2001) ^[19], where the study findings show that Parental gender, previous experience and severity of the child illness may influence their stress responses and psychological outcomes.

Objective 3: To identify the association between psychological wellbeing among parents and illness related variables of child in selected hospitals of Guwahati, Kamrup (M), Assam

The finding related to association between psychological wellbeing and illness related variables of the child shows that, psychological wellbeing is significantly associated with duration of hospitalization of the children. Whereas, it is found that psychological wellbeing is not associated with age, diagnosis, place of admission and previous history of hospitalization of the children.

The finding is supported by study conducted by Muscara F, McCarthy MC, Woolf C, Hearps SJ, Burke K, Anderson VA (2015) ^[22] to assess the early psychological reactions in parents of children with a life threatening illness within a pediatric hospital setting. The findings reveals that the child's medical condition is not associated with parents' experience of clinically significant psychological symptoms, and emphasize the importance for health care providers to be aware of these potential psychological reactions in parents, regardless of the type of illness.

The findings were contrary to study conducted by Berenbaum J, Hatcher J. (1992) ^[51] where the results show that the mothers of children admitted to the PICU experienced greater state of anxiety, depression, confusion, and anger than the other mothers admitted in general pediatric wards. Number of prior hospitalizations of the ill child, and the mother's rating of the severity of her child's illness were predictive of emotional distress.

Conclusion

Hospitalization of a child is a stressful experience, affecting the parental psychological wellbeing. The present study aimed to assess the psychological wellbeing among parents of hospitalized children in selected hospitals of Guwahati,

Kamrup (M), Assam. The finding reveals that majority of the subjects, i.e. 75 (62.5%) have average psychological wellbeing. Hence it is essential to take interventional measures for improving their psychological wellbeing. Further research is urgently needed to test the effectiveness of different methods to provide psychological, emotional and instrumental support for parents, focusing on increasing parent coping resources and reducing distress during hospitalization.

Recommendation

- The study can be replicated on a large sample size of the same characteristics for generalization.
- An experimental study can be carried out to determine the effectiveness of coping strategies, planned teaching program & relaxation therapies to improve the psychological wellbeing of parents of hospitalized children.
- A comparative study can be carried on the psychological wellbeing among parents and hospitalized children
- An exploratory study can be carried out to identify the coping strategies employed by the parents during their child hospitalization.
- A comparative study can be carried out on the psychological wellbeing of children and adults.

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